


# Lessons Learned in Public Land Management

Crested Pool is just one of the thermal features that earned Yellowstone its national park  distinction in 1872. (Neal Herbert/flickr)

Singled out for its unique thermal landscape, Yellowstone became the world's first national park in 1872. Since then, the U.S. government's approach to public land management has evolved, influenced by science and public opinion. National Park Service officials Patrick Gregerson and John Dennis offer lessons learned to others interested in public land management.

**Identify unique attributes.** What are the scenes, sounds, smells and stories that separate this land from other tracts? For Yellowstone, it is the park's position on one of the world's largest calderas and its possession of two-thirds of the world's geysers.

**Consider cultural value.** "I've really become sensitive to the park's cultural resources, and to seeing that they are of equal value to the natural resources," said Dennis, who began as a plant biologist. Although valued for its natural resources, Yellowstone holds spiritual value among Native American tribes and witnessed storied westward expansion by early settlers.

**Make a plan.** "Planning provides a logical, trackable rationale for decisionmaking," Gregerson said. A good plan answers questions like these: What is this park's purpose? What makes it significant? What are its fundamental resources and values?

**Involve everyone.** "All citizens have a role in planning," Gregerson said. The park service asks for input from state, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and private industry whenever it is considering any action that might have an environmental impact. It records all discussions publicly and allows the public to comment throughout the process.

**Keep an open mind.** The U.S. Forest Service, for example, wanted to use a herbicide in Pacific Northwest forests to encourage conifer growth. Concerned about toxicity, a coalition of planters, scientists and residents worked with the agency to develop a plan that did not rely on herbicide for tree growth. That's typical. Gregerson said agencies tweak most plans before implementing.

**Look for mitigating measures.** Agencies request a "mitigating measure" when environmental harm is done or public access lost. If the Bureau of Land Management extracts minerals, the park service could ask its sister agency (both are under the U.S. Department of the Interior) to offset the harm done by buying adjacent, equivalent — down to the number of trees — land.

**Seek tourism and preservation.** Managing parks so people can enjoy them is a park service mandate. "Many people have argued there is conflict between preservation and enjoyment," Dennis said. "I've come to realize that it's not a conflict — both are absolutely necessary to meet the purpose of the parks."

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## Highlights from a #YALICHAT with Ambassador Cathy Russell

U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Cathy Russell held a Twitter chat with the YALI Network on Wednesday, March 18th to talk about challenges facing women in Africa and to support the #Africa4Her pledge.

*Hi everyone! I'm excited to talk with you about investing in women and girls today. [#YALICHAT](#) [#Africa4Her](#) [pic.twitter.com/Lp9sOxtPgw](https://pic.twitter.com/Lp9sOxtPgw)*

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

### **Ambassador Russell started with a question for the YALI Network...**

*What are some challenges you see young women facing in your communities? [#YALICHAT](#) [#Africa4Her](#)*

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

### **And received some critical answers:**

[@AmbCathyRussell](#) *Some of the challenges include unemployment, education and early marriages [#YALICHAT](#) [#Africa4Her](#)*

— Dorcas Aba Annan (@NABAFOUNDATION) [March 18, 2015](#)

*The situation I see it worrying is teenage pregnancy in Ghana, especially the fishing communities. [#Yalichat](#) [#Africa4Her](#)*

— #MGWV Nana Yaw (@nayakjnr) [March 18, 2015](#)

We have very few women proficient in IT (I.C.T.) in Ghana. At my workplace, I share much IT skills/protocols with them [#Africa4Her](#) [#YALICHAT](#)

— Sam Adzaka (@samdzaka) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@AmbCathyRussell](#) [@YALINetwork](#) unless married, a woman is never taken seriously [#YALICHAT](#) [#Africa4Her](#)

— Afro Ginger (@cathychansa) [March 18, 2015](#)

What was ur biggest challenge & how did you overcome it ? & be where you are right now. [@AmbCathyRussell](#) [#YALICHAT](#) [@YALINetwork](#) [#Africa4her](#)

— Frehiwot Negash (@FrehiwotNG) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@FrehiwotNG](#) It can be uncomfortable to be in the spotlight. But I've found it's worth it to be out there to support women & girls. [YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

[.@AmbCathyRussell](#) in what specific ways can we educate men & children on respecting & supporting women's rights? [@YALINetwork](#) [#YALICHAT](#)

— EAWi (@EAWinitiative) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@EAWinitiative](#) [@YALINetwork](#) 1/2 Need to remember that women's rights are human rights and that women are drivers of change. [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@EAWinitiative](#) 2/2 We can also recognize the traditional role women already play as leaders in communities and families. [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@AmbCathyRussell](#) [@YALINetwork](#) [#YALICHAT](#) how can a developing nation best address gender stereotypes? Especially in young peoples.

— Jack Kafwanka ([@Rjkafwanka](#)) [March 16, 2015](#)

[@Rjkafwanka](#) [@YALINetwork](#) Education/opportunity are key & recognizing the many ways women contribute to stability/econ growth [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell ([@AmbCathyRussell](#)) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@YALINetwork](#) [@AmbCathyRussell](#) please let us know your advices upon how men can engage to respect women right?

— colomba ([@letlubero](#)) [March 16, 2015](#)

[@letlubero](#) Men and boys are critical allies to advancing rights of women/girls. We cannot do this alone. [#YALIchat](#).

— Cathy Russell ([@AmbCathyRussell](#)) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@letlubero](#) [@YALINetwork](#) Men can stand up against violence, discrimination & support girls education. [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell ([@AmbCathyRussell](#)) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@YALINetwork](#) [@AmbCathyRussell](#) What is your recommendation on combating [#GBV](#) as you are working globally on women issue? [#YALICHAT](#)

— Frehiwot Negash ([@FrehiwotNG](#)) [March 17, 2015](#)

[@FrehiwotNG](#) We have to approach it holistically by addressing health, education, legal reform, enforcement, econ empowerment. [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell ([@AmbCathyRussell](#)) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@FrehiwotNG](#) We also need to encourage men & boys to take an active role in preventing [#GBV](#). [#YALICHAT](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@YALINetwork](#) [@AmbCathyRussell](#) focus is as an African woman in Kenya how accessible are jobs as opposed to starting a business ?

— Brenda Kemunto (@bkemunto) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@bkemunto](#) Our AWEF-WECREATE centers in Africa will support wmn entrepreneurs, hopefully createa new jobs. <http://t.co/1yZTuzgKKf> [#yalichat](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

## **Ambassador Russell signed off with a pledge to the YALI Network**

Thank you so much for all your great questions and for sharing how women face challenges in your communities. [#yalichat](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

I'm proud to take the [#Africa4Her](#) pledge to invest in women and girls. [#YALICHAT](#) [#LetGirlsLearn](#) [pic.twitter.com/74AubUsSbz](http://pic.twitter.com/74AubUsSbz)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

Join me in pledging to invest in women and girls today -> <https://t.co/S53vPbONXP> [#yalichat](#) [#Africa4Her](#)

— Cathy Russell (@AmbCathyRussell) [March 18, 2015](#)

## **The YALI Network looks forward to more #YALICHATS with Ambassador Russell!**

[#YALICHAT](#) [@YALINetwork](#) Thank you YALI for an interesting chat with Ambassador Cathy Russell. Looking forward to more brainstorming chats.

— Hadiza Idris (@tweetdijenow) [March 18, 2015](#)

[@bflowmusic](#) continue with that spirit bro empowering women [#yalichat](#)

— Mercy Bandaras (@Mercymimiz) [March 18, 2015](#)

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## [#YALICHAT with the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Cathy Russell](#)

*Cathy Russell serves as the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. Previously she served at the White House, coordinating the development of the Obama Administration's strategy to prevent and respond to gender-based violence globally. Join Ambassador Russell ([@AmbCathyRussell](#)) for a Twitter #YALICHAT on Wednesday, March 18th at 13:00 UTC. Additional details below.*



ssell visits girls at a school in Zambia

As young African leaders and followers of the YALI Network, you already know that the United States invests in women and girls because it's the right thing to do for gender equality and the smart thing to do for our foreign policy.

When policies and programs consider women and girls, they're more successful. They promote stronger democracies and more durable peace agreements. They increase food security and make for healthier families. They improve public service delivery. And they lead to fewer conflicts and more rapidly growing economies.

As the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, it's my job to work with my colleagues across the U.S. government and with leaders around the world to advance the status of women and girls worldwide. Every day I talk with government officials, world leaders, and women and girls around the world about how women have contributed to global progress and why we need to break the barriers keeping women and girls from fully participating in society.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of presenting ten women from ten countries with the Secretary of State's [International Women of Courage Award](#). These women, including Marie Claire Tchecola from Guinea and Beatrice Epaye from the Central African Republic, have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights and empowerment.

As an emergency room nurse in Guinea, Marie Claire Tchecola has been on the front lines of the fight against Ebola. When she became infected with the Ebola virus, she took precautions to protect other workers and her family from contracting the disease - and when she recovered, she went back to work. Through her leadership in the Ebola Survivors Association of Guinea, Marie Claire continues to spread awareness about the disease and fight the stigma associated with its survivors.

When Seleka rebels stormed the streets of Bangui and overtook the Central African Republic's capital, one of their first stops was the office of Beatrice Epaye, an outspoken activist who raised her voice to condemn the horrors of civil war and to call for peace, human rights, and good governance. Refusing to be intimidated, Beatrice took to the radio and met with local and international organizations, eventually becoming the president of the Preparatory Committee for the National Dialogue.

Ms. Tchecola and Ms. Epaye are proof of how women can and do transform societies with little fanfare through their everyday actions. Yet in every country - from Guinea to Germany to Guatemala - women and girls face challenges and barriers that keep them from fully participating. A family may choose to send a son, but not a daughter, to school because there's only enough money for one child's fees. A woman may be kept from launching a new business because she can't access capital. Or bias and stereotypes about women's roles in society will keep a woman from her rightful seat at the peacekeeping table or in Parliament.

It will take all of us - men and women, boys and girls - to achieve the progress we need to unleash the power of women and girls. But if every one of us takes action, we can break down these barriers and open doors for women and girls of courage.

I urge you all, both my fellow women and our male allies, to [take the #Africa4Her pledge](#) and tell us how you will invest in women and girls. Show us how you will raise, educate, protect, support, mentor, and elevate the many women and girls of courage in your life.

*Join the YALICHAT on Wednesday, March 18th at:*

*12:00-13:00 Cape Verde Time (CVT)*

13:00-14:00 UTC/GMT

14:00-15:00 West Africa Time (WAT)

15:00-16:00 Central Africa (CAT) and South Africa Standard Time (SAST)

18:00-19:00 Eastern Africa Time (EAT)

19:00-20:00 Seychelles and Mauritius (SCT/MUT)

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## [#YALIVotes: Join Your Community](#)

*“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears”*

*« Que vos choix reflètent vos espoirs, non vos peurs. »*

- Nelson Mandela



Credit: AP Images

Africa is rising and Africa is voting. In the coming months, many Africans across the continent will be heading to the polls. These elections are important not just for you and your country, but for the entire continent of Africa and across the globe. Elections are the fundamental means by which citizens connect to their government and the world – but your responsibility and opportunity doesn't stop there. As young leaders, you can show the importance of participating in elections and staying actively engaged in civic life after the polls close, to make your voice heard.



Credit: AP Images

*L'Afrique est en pleine croissance et l'Afrique vote. Au cours des prochains mois, beaucoup d'Africains se rendront aux urnes. Ces élections sont importantes non seulement pour vous et votre pays, mais aussi pour tout le continent et le monde. Les élections constituent le lien fondamental entre les citoyens et leur gouvernement, d'une part, et le monde, d'autre part mais votre responsabilité ne s'arrête pas là. Vous, jeunes leaders, vous pouvez vous faire entendre en montrant combien il est important de participer aux élections et en restant activement engagés dans la vie civique, même après la fermeture des bureaux de vote.*

Show your community that #YALIVotes to bring about a more prosperous, democratic and peaceful Africa. Tweet or share on Facebook what you believe is important about Africa's upcoming elections by filling in the blank: “#YALIVotes because \_\_\_\_.”

*Montrez autour de vous que la communauté YALI est prête à voter pour rendre l'Afrique plus prospère, démocratique et pacifique. Tweetez et partagez sur Facebook ce qui vous paraît important dans les prochaines élections en complétant la phrase : « #YALIVOTES parce que \_\_\_\_\_ ».*

## **Read more about the importance of elections and democracy:**

[Nigerian YALI Member Stands Up to Violence](#)

[To Get Change, Vote](#)

[Afrobarometer Tracks Opinion and Democratic Trends](#)

[#YALICHAT: Engaging Youth in the Democratic Process](#)

[Civil Society: At the Core of Democracy and Human Nature](#)

[How to Launch Women into Political Leadership](#)

[Candidate Debates Are Centerpiece of Democracy: 1 of 3](#)

[Organize a Candidate Debate: 2 of 3](#)

[Partner With the Media: 3 of 3](#)

[#YALIVotes Tweets](#)

## **ENGAGE WITH US:**

[Follow @YALINetwork](#)

*#YALIVotes is a campaign of the Bureau of International Information Programs in the U.S. Department of State for the Young African Leaders Initiative Network in Africa.*

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## **Tanzanian Plans to Inspire Youth to Vote**

*Join Chedi on the video #YALICHAT Engaging Youth in the Democratic Process on Wednesday, February 25th at 1400 UTC.*

Chedi Ngulu. Photo Courtesy: 

State Dept./Dartmouth

Chedi Ngulu has big plans for young people in Tanzania. The 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow and YALI Network member in Dar es Salaam wants to use popular music and technology to inspire the new generation of Tanzanians to participate in their country's upcoming constitutional referendum and general elections and to help build long-term and sustainable democracy and peace.

To do that, Ngulu will implement #PigaChata (formerly #AHADI), a voter education and turnout campaign. Through the campaign, he wants Tanzania's youth to sign a pledge that they will "vote responsibly in 2015" for both the referendum and elections. They can either sign the pledge in-person or online, Ngulu says.

The head of MegaMark Communications has a passion for communications, media, business and music. Already he has led several major commercial and social marketing campaigns for companies, government and international organizations and has organized major events like concerts and conferences.

#PigaChata, slang for "leave a mark," is modeled after the successful "Rock the Vote" campaign in the United States launched in 1990 to motivate American youth to participate in the electoral process. Rock the Vote is the largest nonprofit and nonpartisan organization in the United States driving youth to the polls.

#PigaChata will target those between ages 18 and 25, focusing on four major cities: Dar es Salaam, Arusha, Mwanza and Zanzibar. It will recruit well-known and up-and-coming hip-hop artists to collaborate on a signature campaign song that promotes responsible civic engagement, with a focus on registering and voting. All recordings will be pushed for play on radio and television. College debates, town hall meetings and grass-roots engagements will expand on campaign awareness.

Digital media makes one of the most important components of this campaign. Social media — especially Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube — will be used intensely, and thanks to U.S. African Development Foundation (USADF) funding, #PigaChata is working on a voter education and information mobile app that will also feature an interactive SMS platform.

Ngulu also has plans for a series of free, public concerts in each of the target areas with artists touring local schools and hosting town forums to engage youth. "The concerts, music and art competition events will draw out people so that we can sign up large groups at once," he says.

Ngulu notes that 65 percent of Tanzanians are under age 24, and there are over 6.6 million Tanzanians between ages 18 and 24. "This age cohort alone has the potential to determine the next president of Tanzania," he says.

The campaign will also reach young people who are not old enough to vote, Ngulu adds. These youth "will be impacted by the messaging, allowing us to plant seeds in future voters," he says.

A survey of youth after 2010 elections, during which voter participation was nearly half of what it was in 2005, reinforced the need for a strong outreach campaign "that both educates young Tanzanians about their voting rights and the registration process and that also inspires them to be more engaged," according to the businessman.

He notes that the campaign will also support the goals of the national and Zanzibar-region strategies

for growth and the reduction of poverty, greater citizen participation in democratic governance, and improving democratic institutions and national unity.

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## **#YALICHAT: Engaging Youth in the Democratic Process**

Voting is one of the greatest civic responsibilities of a citizen. However, many youth across Africa are unaware of the steps one needs to take to participate in the electoral process in their countries. Join two Mandela Washington Fellows, Sobel Ngom from Senegal and Chedi Ngulu from Tanzania, to learn about their initiatives to educate youth about their voting rights and the registration process. They will discuss how they initiated their projects, mobilized volunteers and other organizations to help them, and how they used traditional and social media to spread the word.

For more about the program, read "[To Get Change, Vote](#)"

### **About the Program**

#### **Sobel Aziz Alfred Marie Ngom, Senegal**

[Sobel Ngom](#) is the Founder and Executive Director of Social Change Factory, a citizen leadership center created in whose mission is to inform youth of their civil, economic and social responsibilities. In 2012, he designed and implemented the Voix Des jeunes (Voices of Youth), a program that provide key information regarding the voting registration and process during the 2012 elections in Senegal.

#### **Chedi Festo Ngulu, Tanzania**

[Chedi Ngulu](#) is the founder of MegaMark Communications and has led several major commercial and social marketing campaigns for companies, government, and international organizations. He plans to implement #AHADI, a voter education and registration campaign to increase youth engagement in the upcoming 2015 general elections in Tanzania.

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## **Senegalese Group Teaches How to Vote, Have a Choice**

Join Sobel on the video [#YALICHAT Engaging Youth in the Democratic Process](#) on Wednesday, February 25th at 1400 UTC.

As Dakar resident Sobel Ngom completed his high school final exams, he began to think that if more

people knew how to vote, they could change their country's future.

A visit to a family friend in a village shed further insight on that thought. The visit "changed my life," Ngom says. The villagers he met "didn't care about elections. They didn't know the candidates. The democratic system was not a part of their lives."

Later, as a communications major at SupDeCo University in Dakar, Ngom set his sights on teaching people all over Senegal how to vote. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2012, just as Senegal's presidential election was approaching. He wanted people to make conscious, informed decisions about who their next political leader would be.

He recruited a couple of university friends to join him. With about \$3,000 in contributions from friends and family, the three-member team developed a voter education campaign that combined social media, print, television and in-person outreach strategies designed to reach as many people as possible. Through word-of-mouth, within weeks the team had grown to 25 volunteers.

## Achieving Success

Ngom, a member of the YALI Network and 2014 Mandela Washington Fellow, described how his group in three months created greater awareness among the targeted audience about the voting process.

The team organized public presentations to help villagers understand the importance of voting. The presentations included a basic handout using simple language to describe the basics of democracy and voter registration.

The team worked one-on-one with older community members – most of whom had no official record of their birth or residency – to help them get proper documentation from their municipal governments allowing their registration as voters. Older people were "very supportive" of what the team was doing, Ngom says.

To reach youth, the team employed social media platforms like Facebook and You Tube, and events like concerts to encourage voter registration and democratic participation. It put an online version of the handout on its Facebook page called [Voix Des Jeunes](#) (Voices of Youth).

Ngom's colleagues even created an online practice ballot to familiarize future voters with the process of casting a vote. Because their parents had never voted, youth, who are the majority of Internet users, did not have a family tradition of going to the polls.

"We chose not to say to people 'guys, you have to vote,'" Ngom emphasizes. Instead, "we wanted to help them understand the process." Team members stayed away from promoting or opposing any candidate.


Along the way, Ngom says he sought advice from an uncle and other family members. His father, a diplomat, and sister, a former United Nations development worker, helped him find out how to apply for additional funding.

Parallel to this voter education work, Ngom heads the social media department for a digital company. He also has started several projects including a summer school program for rural youth,

aiming to reduce the gap in national exam results between rural and urban students. He recently started a leadership center called “Social Change Factory” to inform youth in French-speaking Africa of their civic, economic and social responsibilities.

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## Civil Society: At the Core of Democracy and Human Nature

Dozens of people rallied in New Mexico  in January 2015 in favor of using renewable fuels in electric power generation. Civil society groups have helped citizens play an influential role in local, regional and national energy policies.

When individual citizens with shared interests join together to voice their concerns, democracies work better. Civil society contributions to well-functioning governments are widely recognized among those who study these issues.

South Africa’s Archbishop Desmond Tutu once described the role of this social sector as “at the core of human nature. We human beings want to get together with others ... and act collectively to make our lives better.”

Tutu’s words were quoted in an extensive report on this topic in 2012, *Defending Civil Society*. The World Movement for Democracy published the report in its role as an organization dedicated to keeping democracies healthy and vibrant.

Though government attempts to suppress civil society activities somewhere in the world are reported frequently, *Defending Civil Society* establishes that citizen organizations have fundamental rights in international law.

### **The Right to Entry (Freedom of Association)**

(1) International law protects the right of individuals to form, join and participate in civil society organizations, such as trade unions, associations and other types of civil society organizations (CSOs), to pursue a broad range of legal objectives.

(2) Individuals are not required to form a legal entity in order to enjoy the freedom of association.

(3) International law protects the right of individuals to form a CSO as a legal entity. Whatever system is put in place to extend a form of legal recognition must be accessible, with clear, speedy, apolitical and inexpensive procedures.

## **The Right to Operate Free from Unwarranted State Interference**

(1) Once established, CSOs have the right to operate free from unwarranted state intrusion or interference in their affairs. International law creates a presumption against any regulation or restriction that interferes in recognized rights.

(a) Interference can only be justified where it is prescribed by law and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

(b) Laws and regulations governing CSOs should be implemented and enforced in a fair, apolitical, objective, transparent and consistent manner.

(2) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, are protected against unwarranted interference with their privacy.

## **The Right to Free Expression**

(1) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of expression. CSOs are protected in their ability to speak critically about government law or policy, and to speak favorably about human rights and fundamental freedoms.

(2) Interference with freedom of expression can only be justified where it is provided by law and necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, or for the protection of national security or public order, or of public health or morals.

## **The Right to Communication and Cooperation**

(1) Civil society representatives have the right to communicate and seek cooperation with counterparts, the business community, international organizations and governments, both within and outside their home countries. Communications may occur through any media, across any border.

## **The Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly**

(1) Civil society representatives, individually and through their organizations, enjoy the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

(2) The law should affirm a presumption in favor of holding assemblies. Those seeking to assemble should not be required to obtain permission to do so.


(a) Where advance notification is required, notification rules should not be onerous.

(b) The law should allow for spontaneous assembly, as an exception to the notification requirement, where the giving of notice is impracticable.

(3) The law should allow for simultaneous assemblies or counter-demonstrations, while recognizing the governmental responsibility to protect peaceful assemblies and participants in them.

(4) Interference with freedom of assembly can only be justified when it is in conformity with the law

and necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order, the protection of public health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

About 500 citizens participated in a  town hall meeting in Chicago on the legalization of medical marijuana, another controversial issue in which civil society organizations have wielded considerable influence.

### **The Right to Seek and Secure Resources**

(1) Within broad parameters, CSOs have the right to seek and secure funding from legal sources, including individuals, businesses, civil society, international organizations and intergovernmental organizations, as well as local, national and foreign governments.

### **State Duty to Protect**

(1) The state has a duty to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the obligation to protect the rights of civil society.

(2) The state duty should also ensure that the legislative framework relating to fundamental freedoms and civil society enables their activities and fully recognizes their rights.

View [Defending Civil Society](#) in full.

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## **#YALICHAT on Technology & Democracy**

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the YALI Network featured Chris Spence, Chief Technology Officer at the [National Democratic Institute \(NDI\)](#) in a 3-day Facebook #YALICHAT. NDI is an non-partisan organization that works to strengthen democratic institutions worldwide and encourages citizen participation, openness, and accountability in government. At NDI, Spence leads the initiatives to use technology to advance democratic governance. Questions and comments from the YALI Network centered on [the role of technology in democracy](#), [how technology can improve transparency and government accountability](#), and [using technology to empower people to become more involved in politics](#).

In advance of the #YALICHAT, Spence shared some of his experiences applying technology to democratic institutions in Africa in a blog post entitled [Using New Technologies to Strengthen Democracy](#).

Join the YALI Network to get updates on future #YALICHATs and engage with us on [Facebook](#).

[Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## The chat discussed...

Transparency:



Using social media to bridge gaps between youth and politicians:



Taking political action:



Online security:



Election monitoring:



Social media as a tool for marginalized groups:



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# Communities Are Critical to Effective Disease Responses

*“The most important role communities can play is to rapidly report and isolate infected patients so that the sick will not continue to infect their families and communities.”*

— Saran Kaba Jones

The founder of a community development organization in Liberia — Saran Kaba Jones of [FACE](#)

[Africa](#) — has mobilized community health efforts in response to the 2014 outbreak of the often-fatal infectious disease Ebola in West Africa.

Saran Kaba Jones, left, leads health  education campaigns with FACE Africa in Liberia.

Credit: Keiko Hiromi

More than 18,600 cases of the disease have caused almost 7,000 deaths in the region, according to early December data from international health monitors. As the year comes to a close, signs are emerging that the outbreak is in remission.

FACE Africa and Jones' efforts have certainly made a contribution to the decline in cases noted in Liberia. In a Facebook chat with the YALI Network, Jones explained that she originally established FACE Africa five years ago to help improve access and awareness about safe water, sanitation and hygiene.

When Ebola presented itself as a more immediate crisis, Jones said FACE Africa redirected its efforts to the crisis of the moment.

"We leveraged our existing on-ground staff resources, extensive local knowledge and deep-rooted community trust to begin working on social mobilization, prevention and awareness programs, distribution of hygiene kits, and held public engagement activities to counter damaging rumor, fear and misunderstanding about the virus. While it was successful, we still need to continue our work to ensure zero new cases over a long period of time."

With thousands of YALI Network members participating in the [December 16-18 Facebook chat](#), Jones explained the top messages her group conveyed to the communities they work in:

- 1) What is Ebola and how is it transmitted?
- 2) How to recognize the signs and symptoms of Ebola.
- 3) What measures and precautions to take to avoid exposure to the disease.
- 4) How to deal with suspected cases of Ebola.

"The most important role communities can play [in combating disease] is to rapidly report and isolate infected patients so that the sick will not continue to infect their families and communities," Jones said.

FACE Africa is working to train about 750 volunteers in Ebola awareness and prevention procedures, an effort that has helped to expand local understanding of proper hygiene practices. That achievement should have value beyond this outbreak, Jones predicted, contributing to broader adoption of sanitation practices which can help prevent other common diseases and improve overall health.

The West African Ebola outbreak of 2014 is the largest to occur anywhere in the world, infecting more people than any other previous outbreak. Still, the experience of earlier outbreaks in other parts of Africa should prove instructional, Jones said. She points to successful efforts in recent years to control Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. Local people — working

quickly, responding properly — hold the key to overcoming Ebola and other health threats.

“It is the local doctors, nurses, community health workers, burials teams, local organizations, youth associations, women’s groups, religious leaders and many volunteers, perhaps working alongside international partners, that will ultimately win this war,” Jones told the YALI Network.

The Ebola outbreak has had ripple effects in West Africa beyond the health sector: Economics, education, agriculture and transportation have also been affected. Setbacks in these other sectors must also be corrected before a full recovery can be achieved.

“It is up to us as individuals — you, me and every single one of you on this YALICHAT. We can get involved and take action. We each have what it takes to transform our continent and build healthier, more resilient communities. Not only for ourselves but for our children and our children’s children,” Jones wrote on Facebook.

Part of aiding the recovery is getting the story straight, she said. International media coverage, rumour and exaggeration have all contributed to fear and hysteria about the outbreak. In turn, this ill-informed, frightened discourse has cast an unfavorable light on Africa in general, Jones said, and everybody has a role in setting that record straight.

“But what’s missing from the narrative are the thousands of Ebola patients that have been successfully treated and discharged from treatment centers. As Africans, we need to tell these success stories.”

The Facebook chat with Saran Kaba Jones of FACE Africa is available on Facebook:

[Questions on FACE Africa](#)

[Questions on community responses to Ebola](#)

[Questions on the effects of stigma](#)

Authoritative information on the status of the West African Ebola update is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/> and <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/situation-reports/en>.

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